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Thirty-Sixth Report

**COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS**

**(This report covers the period from
24 October through 30 October 1973)**

*This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.*

NSA review completed

DIA review(s)
completed.

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COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS*

(This report covers the week from
24 October through 30 October 1973)

The Key Points

- Nearly 1,500 infiltrators were detected this week moving toward southern Laos and the area of the Communists' new supply corridor in western South Vietnam.
- The cessation of the heavy rains in the North Vietnamese Panhandle has been followed by stepped up logistic activity, but routes in northern South Vietnam remain flooded and closed to traffic.
- For the first time in over six months, substantial cargo shipments destined for northern Laos have been detected. To the south in Laos, the Communists are preparing for heavy vehicular activity in mid-November.
- Indications suggest that COSVN may be expanding its command responsibility into the northern half of South Vietnam.
- Aerial photography has revealed extensive construction activity within Communist controlled areas of South Vietnam, Laos, and eastern Cambodia. Roads are being extended, and airfields repaired.
- Combat activity remained at low levels in both South Vietnam and Laos last week.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

The Details

Forward

seventh

NOTE: This is the thirty-sixth in a series of memoranda summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

A. Personnel Infiltration and Redeployments

1. During the past week, two new regular combat groups, both of which are destined for southern Laos and adjacent areas, were detected entering the pipeline at Vinh in North Vietnam. These new groups raise our estimate of infiltration starts since 1 September to about 20,000 troops--a total considerably higher than the number who started south during the comparable period in 1972. As shown in Table 1 below, four-fifths of the troops who have infiltrated south since 1 September 1973 have been sent to southern Laos and adjacent areas--a far higher proportion than last year.

Table 1

Comparative Starts by Combat Troops From North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September - 30 October*

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
Total	<u>13,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	9,000	2,000
MR 5	1,500	2,000
B-3 Front	500	0
COSVN	500	0
Southern Laos/MR 559	1,500	16,000

* This table covers the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and southern Laos. Infiltrators moving to northern Laos are not included.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

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South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA¹ RVNAF²

180,000 320,000

VC/NVA

86,000

325th
324B
320B
304th
711th
2nd

RVNAF

VNMC
Airborne
1st
2nd
3rd
Regional
Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

MR 3

VC/NVA RVNAF

36,000 75,000

429th Sapper
Command
9th
7th
5th

25th
18th
5th
Regional
Forces

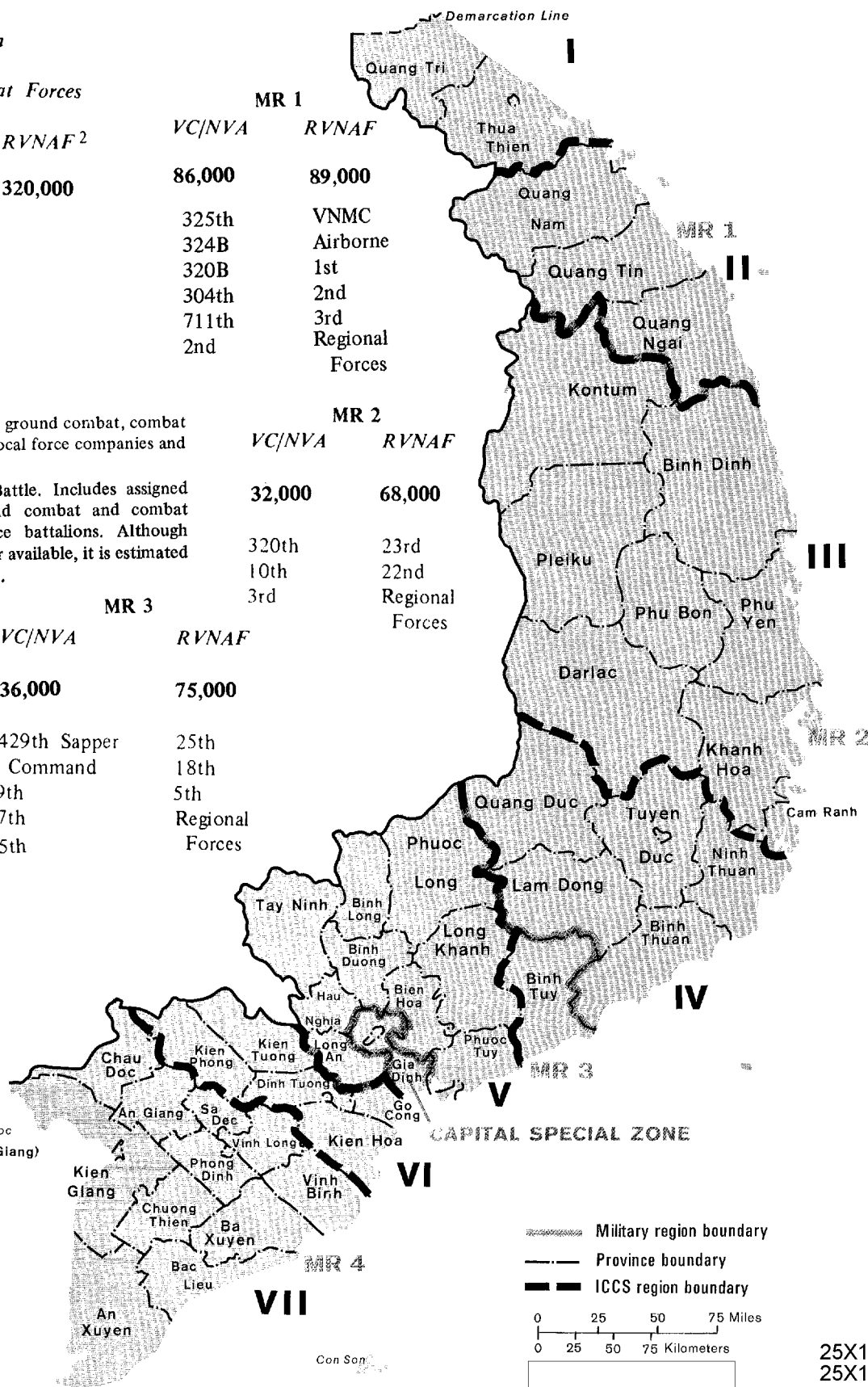
MR 4

VC/NVA RVNAF

26,000 88,000

1st

21st
9th
7th
44th Special
Tactical Zone
Regional Forces



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[redacted]

B. Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies
North Vietnam

2. The heavy rains which had virtually halted traffic in North Vietnam's Panhandle for the past month abated during the reporting period. Small amounts of cargo, including arms and ammunition, were detected moving both in the Vinh area and in southern Quang Binh province. [redacted] about 10 tons of rockets and anti-aircraft artillery ammunition were transferred between storage areas south of Thanh Hoa. In addition, one of the storage areas reportedly had some 70 tons of ammunition, mostly for small arms, remaining to be shipped. [redacted]

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[redacted] the shipment of some 20 tons of rifles to a storage area located further south.

3. Plans for future deliveries were also noted. [redacted] COMINT indicated that a major storage area south of Thanh Hoa would receive nearly 900 tons of arms and ammunition during November and that some 550 tons would be dispatched from it to a storage area about 30 miles further south.

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4. In the area between Quang Khe and the DMZ, significant cargo shipments also were detected after about a one-month lull. [redacted] a logistics unit in southern Quang Binh reported shipping some 25 tons of ammunition and another 125 tons of cargo still in storage. Several days later, on 28 October, a logistic unit in the same area reported that about 80 tons of cargo remained on barges, and 45 tons of dry provisions were stored on shore. [redacted] COMINT revealed the movement of 122 southbound vehicles and 95 northbound vehicles across a major transshipment point just south of Quang Khe.

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Laos

5. For the first time in over six months, substantial cargo shipments were detected destined for northern Laos. [redacted] a major Communist logistics headquarters at Vinh informed one of its subordinates to pick up 120 tons of gasoline and transport it to northern Laos. [redacted]

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some 330 tons of POL were transferred from storage areas near Vinh to Route 7, the principal road leading from North Vietnam into the PDJ area in northern Laos. Early October aerial photography showed that Route 7, although wet and muddy, was indeed capable of sustaining such a supply flow. Historically, POL shipments at this time are not unusual, as the North Vietnamese prime their logistic system in preparation for higher levels of activity during the dry season.

6. Although no large supply shipments were detected in southern Laos, COMINT revealed Communist plans to use 400 vehicles to transfer an unspecified amount of cargo between storage areas in the central Panhandle in mid-November. Probably related to this scheduled increase in logistic activity, were several reports from rear services units in southern Laos which indicated that portions of the two major supply routes in the Panhandle were now capable of handling a light volume of traffic--after being unserviceable for most of the summer rainy season.

South Vietnam

7. South of the DMZ, rains continued to hamper logistic activity. Parts of Route 9 and Route 14 were reported flooded and closed to traffic, and little activity was noted in other areas of northern South Vietnam. Although little cargo was detected moving in this area, over 6,600 tons of rice, other foodstuffs, POL and communications and engineering equipment were stored at two facilities along Route 9 in northern Quang Tri Province.

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II. Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos

A. South Vietnam

8. In South Vietnam, the total number of Communist-initiated ceasefire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January, 15 June, and for the last week (24-30 Oct) are shown below:

Military Region	Total Since 27 January Ceasefire		Total Since 15 June Ceasefire		Last Week (24-30 Oct)	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
MR 1	1,410	4,989	385	1,630	8	84
MR 2	585	3,934	321	2,080	12	114
MR 3	575	4,227	173	1,651	5	88
MR 4	1,177	10,547	499	4,381	39	326
Totals	3,747	23,697	1,378	9,742	64(87)	612(623) <u>1/</u>

1/ Denotes totals of previous week.

9. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The ^{table} above and the charts on the following pages, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the ceasefire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion.

B. Laos

10. There was no significant military activity in Laos last week.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Capabilities in Indochina

A. Expansion of Central Office for South Vietnam's Command Responsibility

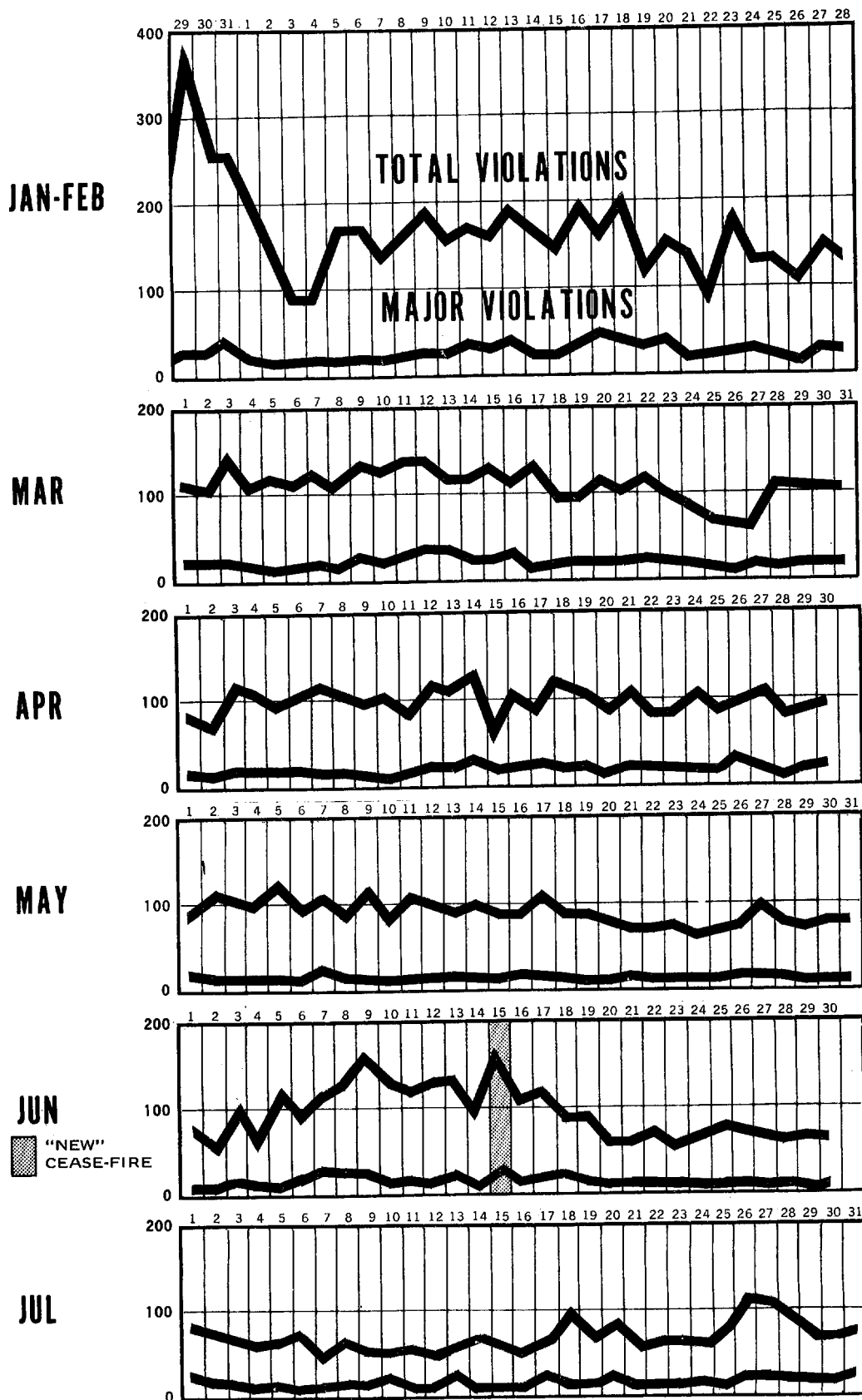
11. The Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) and its military arm, the South Vietnam Liberation Army (SVNLA), may be expanding their command responsibility into the northern half of South Vietnam. Such

(See Reverse Side of Page)



CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

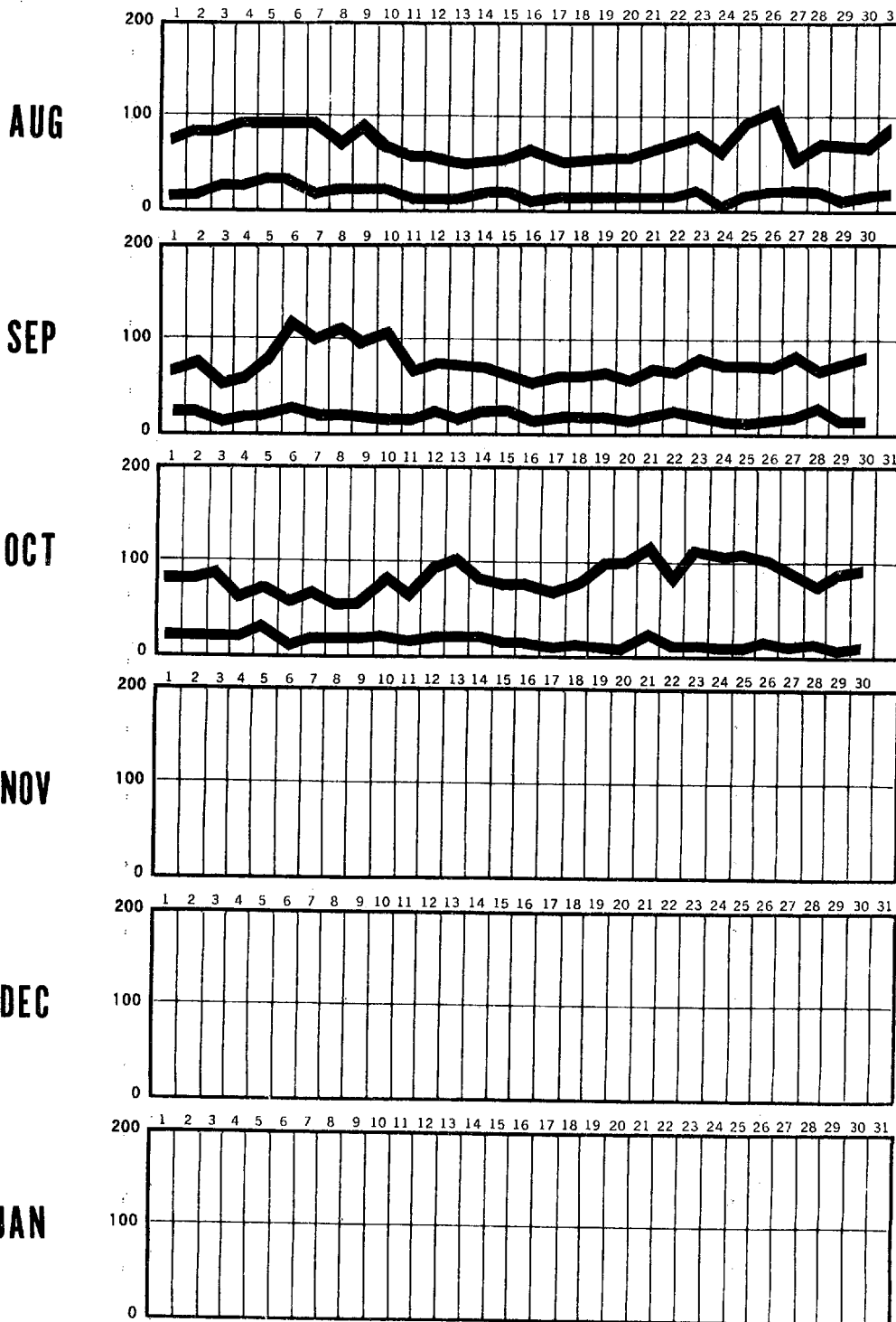
(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)





CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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a development, if true, would be the most far-reaching high echelon Communist command reorganization in South Vietnam in recent years. Historically, COSVN/SVNLA has been responsible for directing military and political operations in GVN MR's 3 and 4, while Hanoi has assumed the command responsibility for the northern half of the country. The evidence of this expansion, however, has come primarily from prisoners, ralliers, and agents. COMINT has not yet reflected any major changes in the existing pattern of communications of COSVN/SVNLA with communist command authorities in the northern part of the country. Therefore, additional evidence will be required before any definitive judgement on the extent and scope of this possible expansion can be made.

B. Recent Communist Construction Activity

12. Analysis of a number of photo-reconnaissance missions flown during September and October has yielded considerable evidence of new and continuing Communist construction activity within VC/NVA-controlled areas of South Vietnam, Laos, and eastern Cambodia. The building of new roads and the upgrading of others still appear to be of first importance to the North Vietnamese, although the photography also recorded improvements to some airstrips and further building of permanent structures/shelters in major base areas and along the major logistic routes.

Roads

13. North Vietnamese engineers are continuing to move toward completion of their two new north-south dual lane road networks, one leading through the Panhandle of Laos and the other--designated "Route 14" by the Communists--in South Vietnam along the western GVN border. Although late wet season storms have slowed the pace of construction along the Laotian corridor, several gaps in the central portion have been cleared and graded in recent weeks, and its dual lane terminus was extended another 15 to 20 miles south. The recent extension of this roadway into the tri-border area now indicates the

[redacted]

new system will probably link up with the Route 14 corridor in South Vietnam, thereby providing the North Vietnamese with two independent supply routes to their southern bases in South Vietnam. When connected, this road network would substantially reduce the effect of the rainy season on the Communist logistic system.

14. In South Vietnam, wet weather has forced some slowdown in the construction of sections of Route 14. Current motorable limits of this route can be traced from the DMZ south some 150 to 170 miles to the vicinity of Kham Duc in Quang Tin Province. From there, construction gaps totaling about 20 miles must still be connected before the northern and southern halves are joined. This 20 mile section of road is being cut through extremely difficult mountainous terrain and probably will take at least another month to complete. Although the lower half of Route 14 is still in the early to mid-stages of construction, most of the major clearing work has been done. Dual-lane construction now extends some 80 miles, including several small gaps, south of Duc Co into Quang Duc Province. This includes about 6 miles of GVN Route TL-6B which the North Vietnamese have widened and which also forms the present southern terminus of the system at the Cambodian border (see the map).

15. Photography [redacted] revealed traces of recent single lane clearing to the southwest of the above dual-lane terminus--apparently the initial work on a further extension of Route 14. The clearing activity begins some 12 miles to the southwest, inside Cambodia, and extends southward 10 to 15 miles before ending about a quarter mile from GVN Route 309. This circuitous alignment through Cambodian territory probably is an effort to bypass the ARVN outpost at Duc Lap, much like the earlier bypassing of the ARVN-held Dak Pek farther north in Kontum Province. Photographic coverage of this area [redacted] showed some of this single-lane clearing was present, but no correlation between it and Route 14 was apparent then.

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Airfields

16. Aerial reconnaissance also shows that repairs and improvements have recently been made to several Communist-held airfields in South Vietnam and Laos. With the exception of the Khe Sanh Airfield, improvements made to some half dozen former US and ARVN airstrips in South Vietnam have been modest,-- limited mostly to filling of craters and general cleanup work, since most all of these airstrips were more or less serviceable when occupied by the Communists. At the Thien Ngon Airfield in Tay Ninh Province, for example, repairs made since mid-July have included the painting of a white guideline down the center of the runway, the building of a detour road around the field, and the construction of some 30 buildings just north of the airfield. Similar repair activity observed in mid-September photography was noted at Loc Ninh Airfield in Binh Long Province and at Bu Dop Airfield in Phuoc Long Province. Bu Dop remains unserviceable, however, with one unfilled crater at the south end of the runway. To date, we have no categorical evidence that the Communists' aircraft have used any of their serviceable airfields in South Vietnam.

17. In Laos, airfield construction and repairs have been more pronounced. The North Vietnamese have reopened the Sam Neua Airfield and built a new dirt strip nearby at Muong Nga (Ban Nakay Neua). Both of these airfields are supporting occasional VIP flights to and from Hanoi. Photography [] indicates that repairs earlier observed being made on the Xieng Khouang Airfield on the Plaine des Jarres have been completed.

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ANNEX A

Post-Ceasefire Infiltration of North Vietnamese
Personnel to the South

1. The detection at BT 8 near Vinh of two regular infiltration groups--5089 and 5090--traveling toward southern Laos has increased our estimate of infiltration starts by nearly 1,500 troops. Since the 15 June "second" ceasefire, more than 27,000 personnel--about 25,000 of whom have been combat troops--have started toward the southern war zones. During the period since the signing of the original ceasefire agreement for South Vietnam on 27 January, almost 78,000 North Vietnamese personnel have infiltrated southward, including nearly 70,000 combat troops and about 8,000 specialists. Of this total, almost 53,000 personnel have started south since 27 January, while 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date.

~~Table 11~~

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Destined for South Vietnam, Southern
Laos, and Cambodia Since 1 January 1973

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Special-Purpose</u>
January	20,000	1,600
February	10,200	2,100
March	3,250	2,250
April	1,925	1,200
May	7,175	300
June	2,200	700
July	3,650	600
August	2,200	700
September	7,000	0
October 1-30	13,325	325

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